

Purchase District Health Department

Public Health Issue

Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity in Schools

Project Description

The Purchase District Health Department is working with individual schools and school districts to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the students and staff. The health department provides resources to the schools to connect them with community agencies that can best assist in implementing healthy changes within the school. The health department provides staff wellness screenings and helps to promote Students with Active Role Models with wellness leaders in the schools.

Target Population

Purchase District Health Department works with all schools in Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman, Fulton and McCracken Counties. According to data from the Kids Count County Data Book, McCracken County and Fulton County ranks as having the worse overall child well-being in the Purchase District. Our main focus is on improving health and wellness within these schools while aiding other school districts as well.

Key Partners

Paducah Independent Schools has allowed a staff member from the Purchase District Health Department to sit in on meetings and give presentations on how to best improve the district and individual wellness policies. Paducah Independent School has allowed space for school and community members to participate in wellness meetings together. Paducah Independent School District Health Coordinator has reached out to health educators at Purchase District Health Department to improve staff wellness. The food service director and district health coordinator participated in the District Wellness Policy Training with a health educator from the health department.

Fulton Independent Schools participated in the District Wellness Policy Training with a health educator from the health department. Health educator has been partnering with the Food Service Director and School Nurse at the Fulton Independent School to create a stronger Wellness Policy in the elementary school.

McCracken County Extension Office has allowed a gathering space to host a meeting with the Agent for Horticulture, Paducah Independent School staff, and Health Department Health Educators to discuss Tower Gardens. The Agent for Family and Consumer Science has provided nutrition lessons in Paducah Independent Schools and McCracken County Schools.

Wellsprings Dermatology provided funding to Paducah Independent Schools to purchase and install Tower Gardens in one science classroom.

Baptist Health rewards schools for hosting wellness meetings. If schools meet a certain criteria they reward the schools with up to \$2000 to spend on schoolspecialty.com.

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Impact/Accomplishment

Paducah Independent School District is currently in the process of planning a staff and community health and wellness day. Paducah Independent School District has 5 schools within their school district; 3 elementary, 1 middle, and 1 high school, all of which have Wellness Committees.

McNabb Elementary School - A partnership was first created with a health educator from the health department and the food service director at the school district in applying for funds for a tower garden in the school. The school received funding from a private donor to purchase and install tower gardens in McNabb Elementary School. Students in a science class at McNabb are currently growing vegetables and herbs.

Fulton Independent Elementary School has made changes to their school wellness policy to make it stronger. It includes language that all students must receive at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day. The policy also states that nutrition education will be addressed and made available to all students through community agencies and family resource center. Within the individual school wellness policy are weblinks to Alliance For A Healthier Generation resources that will help the school to promote healthier celebrations, fundraising, snacks, and rewards. The school included in the wellness policy that nutritional information will be sent home to parents that support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

Purchase District Health Department has a variety of schools in their district with students from different backgrounds. Truancy and behavior issues have become a common problem among students in school. Students with learning disabilities lack focus in class and act out. Teachers are taking away recess as punishment and giving candy and sodas as rewards. I have push back from teachers in a few of my districts that don't want to change their ways of punishment and rewards. I have offered resources as alternatives from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, but some schools are still not accepting the policy changes. I have discovered that my best resource are parents at the school. Currently, I am working on getting involved with the PTO at each school to share healthier options for their children and get their buy in to help push this change in the schools.

Contact Information

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